

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

NEWS & OUTDOOR REPORT

February 25, 2004

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[EDITOR'S NOTE: *This is the first in a series of feature articles focusing on Wisconsin forest resources as part of the centennial observation of a state forestry program in Wisconsin.* **]**

History and benefits of public forest land ownership

MADISON – *The public forests shall benefit present and future generations and contribute to local and state economies and a healthy environment.*

While not a direct quote from the laws that created state and county forests, these words taken from the statutes sum up the intentions of those imaginative leaders who foresaw the many benefits of publicly owned forests. Where others saw fields of stumps and failed farms they envisioned future forests that would provide jobs, raw materials, recreation, homes for wildlife and abundant clean water.

Today, much of these lands are again forested and managed in public ownership as county, state and federal lands.

Most adults and schoolchildren know about the logging of Wisconsin's forests at the close of the 1800s. That "clearing the land" era was a colorful time in state history and produced a rich and romantic lore of logging camps, river drives and lumberjacks.

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Clearing the land for agriculture while providing lumber to build growing cities seemed a good and worthwhile effort at the time. But much of the land, once cleared of forest, proved to have poor soil for farming and a climate unfavorable to crops.

These factors, combined with the depression years of the 20s and 30s, ruined many homesteaders. Failure to pay taxes was widespread. By 1927, over 4.5 million acres of northern Wisconsin had been tax delinquent at least once.

Several laws were passed allowing counties to take over ownership and grow trees as a crop. With 2,350,000 acres of forest in 29 county forests, the Wisconsin county forest system, which celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2004, is an important partner in public land management. State forests, established at about the same time, today total 500,000 acres and Wisconsin's two national forests add another 1.5 million acres to the public's forestland holdings.

Sustainability

All public forests are managed to provide ecological, economic and social benefits for present and future generations, or what forest managers refer to as sustainable management.

"Many of the forest's most important contributions to our quality of life depend on consistent goals, long range planning and management," says Paul DeLong, Wisconsin's chief state forester with the state Department of Natural Resources. "Sustainability was the guiding principle of our early foresters, beginning in 1904 with E.M Griffith, the first state forester. One hundred years later, sustainability remains our goal."

"State law requires that all state and county forests have a detailed management plan," explains Jeff Barkley, DNR Division of Forestry county forest specialist. "Professionals from forestry, hydrology, fisheries, endangered resources, wildlife and recreation contribute to the plans along with citizen input. Primary responsibility for county forest planning lies with the local county forest committees; state forest plan writing is organized by the state forest property managers.

"The plans span 10 to 15 years at a time and are carefully crafted to protect water quality, provide for wildlife habitat and sustainable harvest of forest products, recreational opportunities and aesthetic quality. Each time the plans come up for review and revision, the public is invited to participate in the process. Professional staffs, on both a state and county level, implement the plans using sound science and widely recognized practices."

Best Management Practices, Water Quality and Habitat

Watershed protection is one of the most important ecological benefits provided by the forest.

Wisconsin is a water state and forests play a major role in maintaining our 15,000 lakes and 44,000 miles of streams. Forests determine the quality and quantity of the water released to nearby lakes, streams and drinking water supplies. They filter and cleanse ground water and prevent erosion and siltation. Overhanging trees shade and cool streamwaters, keeping temperatures suitable for fish and other aquatic life.

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Contractors working on public forests follow best management practices (BMP) to protect these important values. Foresters and other staff oversee all projects to ensure compliance with BMPs. Monitoring teams have found that correctly applied BMPs are 99 to 100 percent effective in mitigating impacts to water quality.

Recreation

The State of Wisconsin manages about 1.3 million acres for public recreation. County, local and federal lands provide another 5.5 million acres. The state's Northern Highland – American Legion State Forest alone draws over two million visitors annually.

Outdoor recreation experts point to the value of large blocks of forestland for what they call “linear recreation” - such as trails. Many users consider longer trails to be of higher quality or more desirable. This is especially true in the case of snowmobile, ATV and mountain bike trails where riders can cover large distances in an outing. It is very difficult, sometimes impossible according to the experts, to link together access through numerous private ownerships for this kind of recreation.

“Access to public lands boosts the quality of life for everyone,” says Barkley. “Not everyone can afford or wants to own forestland but knowing they have access is valuable to them. The value of public lands is reflected in the increased property values of private holdings adjacent to public forests. The long term stability and management objectives of public land can not duplicated on the state's private land base.”

The working forests

Wisconsin forests are growing at a rate that exceeds harvest. They support more than 1,850 wood-using companies, produce nearly \$20 billion worth of forest products every year and support 96,000 jobs. Public forests also are the foundation of a \$5.5 billion tourism and recreation economy.

“Forests provide the raw materials for homes, offices, furniture, medicines, paper and more than 5,000 everyday items we depend on,” says DeLong. “The forest industry is one of the top three employers in 42 Wisconsin counties.

“Governor Doyle has declared 2004 as the Year of Wisconsin Forestry, recognizing the importance of the forests in our state,” says DeLong. “The forests play a pivotal role in our history - past, present and future. One hundred years ago wood from Wisconsin helped build the great cities of the Midwest. Today, those forests continue to support our economy, but are now managed in a manner that enhances our environment and quality of life and provides recreation to millions of people.

“Wisconsin's public forests have made an amazing recovery and are now brightening the future for all who depend on them.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeff Barkley - (608) 264-9217; Jim Warren (608) 264-8990

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Comments sought on statewide forest plan

MADISON – A draft statewide forest plan, crafted with extensive public input over the past two years, is now available for review on the Department of Natural Resources Internet site or by requesting a printed copy.

The draft plan is an effort to craft a commonly held vision for Wisconsin's forest resources and develop a strategy to achieve that vision. The plan includes goals, objectives and a partial list of example actions suggested by stakeholders and forestry professionals to achieve the common vision. State forestry planners are seeking comment on the goals and objectives, as well as ideas for additional actions to carry out all aspects of the plan.

"Our forests touch every one of Wisconsin's citizens and countless visitors to Wisconsin," said Paul DeLong, Division of Forestry administrator and Wisconsin's chief forester. "Our forests filter our air and purify our water; they provide homes for wildlife, year-round recreation opportunities and the raw material for our economy and homes. A statewide forest plan has to consider the entire range of ecological, social and economic issues impacting our forests and all the different categories of forest ownership. This plan was developed by natural resource professionals, landowners, and interested citizens throughout the state, it will be a very useful guiding document for years to come."

The plan is based on comments from over 2000 Wisconsin citizens and stakeholders who responded to a statewide mail survey from which 55 trends and issues impacting forests and forest management were identified.

"We have a plan, based on a collective vision of what we want to accomplish. Now we need to tackle the 'how to' questions," says DeLong. "Forest managers and major stakeholders, including forestry businesses, environmental and conservation organizations private non-industrial forest landowners, federal, state, and local governments, and recreation and tourism businesses and interests have developed examples of actions to make the plan happen. We're asking for comments on the examples provided and welcome additional ideas on how to carry out the plan."

The Governor's Council on Forestry, a forest management advisory group appointed by Gov. Jim Doyle, will sponsor a conference in Nov. 2004 at Madison's Monona Terrace Convention Center to prioritize the action list. More information on the conference will be issued as details are finalized.

Wisconsin today can claim over 16 million acres of forestland – 46 percent of the state land area – an outstanding recovery from the cutover and burned forests left from the logging era of the late 1800s – early 1900s. Today, Wisconsin has the most forestland recorded since the beginning of statewide forest inventories in 1936. Over two million acres are considered urban forests – including such areas as parks, greenways, boulevards and backyards – in communities across the state.

"It is perhaps particularly appropriate to be in the final stages of creating this statewide forest plan in 2004, which has been declared the Year of Wisconsin Forestry," said DeLong. "This is the centennial year of forestry in Wisconsin. It was 100 years ago that the state hired its first professional forester, E.M. Griffith, to apply modern, science-based forest management principles to a largely unmanaged and thoroughly exploited forest resource. This was the beginning of sustainable forest management in Wisconsin – a concept we remain dedicated to today."

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Teague Prichard (608) 264-8883

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Proposal would streamline projects affecting state-threatened gartersnake

MADISON – People wishing to learn more about a Department of Natural Resources proposal to streamline incidental take authorizations for the Butler’s gartersnake and plans for continued conservation and recovery of this state threatened species are invited to attend an informational hearing on March 16.

The hearing will be held from 6 to 8:30 p.m. in Room 151 of the Lee Sherman Dreyfus State Office Building, 141 NW Barstow St. Waukesha (the DNR Waukesha Service Center).

Butler’s gartersnake was listed as a state threatened species in 1997 in part due to extensive habitat loss within its very limited range in the rapidly developing Milwaukee metropolitan area. Since 1997, 14 incidental take authorizations have been issued for projects impacting Butler’s gartersnake. This number represents over half of all incidental take authorizations (27 total) for all species issued in that time frame.

“This proposal is part of a conservation strategy that will help ensure the survival of this animal,” said Signe Holtz, director of the DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources. “Maintaining the listing of this animal as a state threatened species is essential to its survival and recovery and the success of the strategy. This strategy will identify areas of the animal’s habitat requiring only minimal review, reducing the time and paperwork necessary to get a project under way without compromising the long-term conservation and recovery of the species.”

“This is an excellent example of making it easier to conduct business by removing excessive regulation while at the same time maintaining protections for a threatened species,” said DNR Secretary Scott Hassett. “This is the kind of common sense regulatory streamlining I was hired to implement.”

Currently, any activity that impacts an animal listed as either endangered or threatened on the Wisconsin Endangered Species list must have an incidental take authorization, including public review, prior to starting the activity. In regard to the Butler’s gartersnake, this proposal would hasten incidental take coverage and eliminate the public review requirement under certain conditions.

The department, in cooperation with snake experts as far away as Tennessee, is currently developing a conservation strategy for the Butler’s gartersnake to ensure its long-term survival. Under the strategy, Butler’s gartersnake habitat would be classified into four categories, based on size and isolation from other suitable snake habitat. The poorest quality sites would be those judged not to contribute to the long-term survival of the snake.

The proposed broad incidental take authorization would cover activities having permanent effects on sites of the poorest quality (sites of “minimal conservation value”) and activities resulting in only temporary disturbance to habitat where Butler’s gartersnakes occur.

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“This will reduce department review time and reduce conditions required of proposed projects for those projects meeting the poor quality habitat criteria,” explains Holtz. “Areas considered important to conserving the snake would still require specific authorization.

“Since its listing in 1997, we’ve greatly increased our understanding of the habitat requirements of the snake while the loss of suitable habitat continued,” added Holtz.

“We needed to find a solution that balances the rarity of the snake and the continued development pressure in its range. This strategy will help ensure the long-term conservation of the species while at the same time, streamlining regulatory review.”

Incidental take that occurs under this authorization is not expected to have a negative effect on the overall status and recovery of the species. The department will continue to review the authorization as the overall conservation strategy develops in the near future. If a project does not meet the conditions of the proposed authorization, individual incidental take authorizations will be required per state statute 29.604.

Copies of the proposed broad incidental take authorization assessment and conditions are available on the DNR Internet site at (search for key words Incidental Take” to find a link to information on the Endangered Resources Web pages at <<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/take/overview.htm>>) or upon request from Andy Galvin, Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Endangered Resources, PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707, or by phone at (608) 264-8968. Public comments will be taken through March 26 and should be sent to Galvin.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Laurie Osterndorf - (608) 267-7552 or
Andy Galvin - (608) 264-8968

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2004 waterfowl hunters conference set for Stevens Point

SPOONER, Wis. – The 2004 Waterfowl Hunters Conference is set for Friday and Saturday, March 5-6 in Stevens Point. Co-sponsors of the event include the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, Ducks Unlimited, and the Department of Natural Resources.

The conference begins at 1 p.m. Friday and ends at 4 p.m. Saturday. Discussion items include waterfowl updates, earlier hunting seasons, hunting zones in Wisconsin, predator control, and waterfowl habitat management.

The conference is open to the public and waterfowl hunters are urged to attend. For reservations and more information, contact Don Gamble at (262) 675-6414 or <jadag@nconnect.net>.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Don Gamble (262) 675-6414

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Wisconsin fish stocking database updated

MADISON – An online database that gives anglers and others quick and convenient access to information about which waters state fisheries biologists have stocked with what fish species has recently been updated. The database now includes stocking information dating back to 1972.

“Now that this older data is available online, anglers can scan back and see what was the stocking history for a particular body of water,” says Mike Staggs, fisheries director for the Department of Natural Resources.

“For the small proportion of waters where stocking plays an important role in maintaining fishing opportunities – Class 2 and 3 trout waters, and Category 0, 2, 3, and 4 musky waters, and walleye waters supported primarily by stocking – this older information can give anglers an idea of what kind of fishing to anticipate,” Staggs says. “They can look back to what was stocked two to four years ago because those are the sizes of fish they would be catching today.” [For DNR lists of musky waters and trout waters, go to www.wisconsinfishing.org, then select “where to fish” on the left.]

The fish stocking database, which debuted in mid-2003, previously contained information about a single year of stocking, 2002. Now, the stocking reports contain information on the county, waterbody, species, strain, location and average length of the fish stocked from 1972 through 2002 by DNR fish hatcheries, ponds, rearing stations and co-op ponds, according to Joanna Griffin, the Department of Natural Resources statewide fisheries database manager who created the Web site and fish stocking summaries. Information covering stocking from 2003 will be added this year.

People can use an interactive map of Wisconsin to easily retrieve and view or print a stocking history for a particular county, all counties at once, Lake Michigan, or Lake Superior. The Web site can be found at <http://www.fishingwisconsin.org>, then looking under “Wisconsin fish” and select “stocking.” The direct URL is <<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/fish/pages/stocking.shtml>>.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Joanna Griffin (608) 264-8953

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Purple loosestrife workshop offered March 5

MADISON – People interested in learning more about using insects to control purple loosestrife – an invasive plant species that has infested many Wisconsin wetlands – can attend a free workshop that will be broadcast to six Wisconsin cities on March 5.

The workshop is intended for teachers, land managers and the general public who are concerned about the potential for this purple-flowered invader has for destroying native wetlands. The workshop will offer information on surveying purple loosestrife locations and raising biocontrol beetles for local release in spring and summer 2004. Free educational materials will be available, including the Purple Loosestrife Biocontrol Manual for Educators and a CD with the manual, PowerPoint primers on surveying and rearing, and current program information. Free rearing equipment will be furnished by the DNR with some available at each site.

The interactive workshop will be broadcast from the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus to over half a dozen cities throughout the state from 9a.m. to noon on March 5. Scheduled outlets are in Eau Claire, Turtle Lake, Green Bay, La Crosse, Madison, Milwaukee, Rhinelander and Wisconsin Rapids, though others may be added. The workshop is co-sponsored by the Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Wetlands Association (WWA) and the UW Extension.

Hands-on purple loosestrife workshop in steven's point on march 27

A hands-on workshop will cover the same material as above, but will be up close and personal and will include a walk to see the purple menace in an actual field site. The class will run from 9 a.m. to noon at the Schmeekle Reserve Visitors' Center. The number of participants is limited for this workshop.

For more information or to pre-register for either workshop, contact the Wisconsin Wetland Association at (608) 250-9971 or by e-mail at <derek@wiscwetlands.org>.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: WWA at (608) 250-9971 or Brock Woods (608) 221-6349

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Outdoor Report as of February 24, 2004

Warm weather and rain in the south and wet snow in the north has caused snow conditions to deteriorate in much of southern and central Wisconsin. Good snow pack of up to 2 feet or more remains throughout much of northern Wisconsin, but the warm temperatures and wet snow were making it difficult for crews to groom either snowmobile or cross-country ski trails.

In general, snowmobile trails are now closed through southern Wisconsin counties and many central Wisconsin counties were beginning to close trails. Warm weather in the forecast for the remainder of the week is expected to cause conditions on snowmobile trails still open in the area to deteriorate rapidly. Snowmobile trails remained open through the north and were in fair to excellent condition, depending on the area. However, wet snow was making it difficult for clubs to groom trails. Cross-country ski trail conditions have deteriorated in the south and some trails may be closing with the warm weather. Trails through central Wisconsin were still being reported as open, but rapidly deteriorating. Trails in the north remained in good to excellent condition.

The warm weather and wet conditions have caused large amounts of slush to form on most lakes throughout Wisconsin, making travel very difficult. Anglers must have permanent ice fishing shanties south of Highway 64 removed from lakes by Friday, March 5, but conservation wardens throughout southern Wisconsin are urging them to remove them now, as the onset of warm weather is making it very difficult to drive any vehicles on lakes and runoff is causing access at public landings to deteriorate. Permanent ice fishing shanties must be removed north of Highway 64 by March 15, but again anglers may want to consider removing them earlier because up to three inches of slush is being reported below the snow on northern lakes. Anglers can continue to use portable shelters that are removed each day.

The general inland game fishing season closes for the season Monday, March 1. There has been some confusion over the closing date because of a rule change that doesn't become effective until next year. Starting in 2005 and subsequent years, the inland game fishing season will close at the end of the day of the first Sunday in March. The panfish seasons remains open year-round as does the game fish season on select waters, as listed in the fishing regulations.

Difficult access on lakes has generally slowed fishing activity statewide, though some anglers are continuing to go out. Game fishing on northern waters has generally been slow, with a some walleye and small northern being taken. Game fishing on southern waters has remained fairly good. Panfishing is beginning to pick up statewide, and should continue to pick up as ice begins to melt and flow into lakes and rivers.

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Sections of the Mississippi River have opened up and ice conditions on the main channel are rapidly deteriorating. Many other major river systems are also beginning to open and snowmobiles or ATVs should no longer travel rivers. Anglers were fishing the Mississippi from boats at Alma, Genoa, and Victory with nice catches of saugers and walleyes being caught. Anglers were moving closer to shore along Green Bay, where some good yellow perch fishing was reported this week.

Opossum's are on the move with milder weather and increased breeding activities. This mostly nocturnal species breeds from February to March and has a gestation period of only 12 to 13 days producing on average nine young per litter. Coyote hunters report that coyote howling and breeding activity has also picked up considerably.

Very large numbers of bald eagles were being reported this week along the Mississippi River as well as 15 to 20 miles inland. Excellent viewing was reported all along the Great River Road. Crossbeak have been seen feeding off the seeds of box elder trees in flocks. And some very welcome sings of spring: male cardinals have begun singing throughout southern Wisconsin and the first robin of the year has been sighted at Wyalusing State Park in Grant County.

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**A three-minute audio version of this report can be heard by calling (608) 266-2277.
A new report is put on the line each week.**

DNR Northern Region

Superior and Ashland DNR Service Center areas

Douglas, Bayfield, Ashland and Iron counties - Snowmobiles are still in abundance in the Lake Superior area. The slow thaw last week did not affect the trails and conditions are still excellent. Snowmobilers should remember to have their machines registered. There have been a number of snowmobilers that have traded or purchased a different machine late in the season and have not had the new registration or any paper work to show the machine was registered. Obeying stop signs and other rules of the road will result in a pleasant snowmobiling experience. Local lakes have heavy snow cover and many have slush making access a problem. The few that can venture out are finding some pan fish action. Lake Superior is producing a few fish with action in the evenings for walleyes in the Bay. Again the ice conditions and slush can make travel difficult.

Brule River State Forest - In the past week the Brule weather station has measured 8.5 inches of new snow. (.79 inches melted) As of Feb 23 there was 23 inches of snow on the ground. On Feb. 18 the recorded high was 50 degrees. The Snowmobile trails are considered to be in very good to excellent shape. The Afterhours Ski Trail is in very good condition considering the warmer temperatures and some melting. It was last groomed Monday Feb. 23.

Amnicon Falls State Park - Cross-country ski trails are in very good to excellent condition. The region received 3 inches of new snow on Feb. 23. Trails were groomed Feb. 24 and have an 18-inch base.

Pattison State Park - The cross-country ski trail was groomed this week and is in very good shape. The 8 Annual Winter Funfest will be held Sunday, Feb. 29. This event is sponsored by the Friends of Pattison and Amnicon Falls State Parks and has been designated as a free day. Activities will be held from noon-3 p.m. and include: children's crafts, sledding, skating, story telling, a sing along, an appearance by Smokey Bear, and concessions.

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Cumberland DNR Service Center Area Polk County

Interstate Park - The park received another 2 inches of snow on Feb. 20. The snow that fell was very wet. Staff attempted to groom the cross-country ski trails; however, due to the very wet snow staff determined the trails would be better if they were left alone. All the trails were groomed last week and are still in very good condition despite the warm weather the past few days.

Spooner DNR Service Center area

Washburn County - Snowmobile trails throughout the area are very good to excellent. An additional 3-5 inches of snow fell on Sunday giving the trails additional cover. Warmer weather is predicted for the upcoming week so trails may deteriorate throughout the week. Fishing has been very slow throughout the area. Some bluegills and crappies are biting near evening. But the bite is sporadic. As the days get longer anticipate the fishing to pick up. Ice travelers are cautioned as they operate across their favorite lake since the area has received heavy snowfalls slush is appearing on some lakes making travel difficult.

Park Falls DNR Service Center area

Deep snow and slush continue to limit fishing activity on most local lakes. The anglers that are venturing out have been sticking to near shore areas and to any packed trails. The milder temperatures have made for more pleasant fishing conditions, but it doesn't seem to have sparked any increase in fish activity. Fishing success has remained real variable – with many anglers reporting some of the slowest fishing of the year so far. A few anglers have had some success, with a few small walleye being found along the deep weed edges in the late afternoon hours.

Action for northern pike and panfish continues to be very slow.

Price, Taylor and Rusk counties - Recent snowfalls have kept snowmobile trails in good to excellent condition. Ice fishing activity is increasing with the recent warming trend. Anglers were catching a few panfish and walleye in the morning and late afternoon towards evening. Ice travel is becoming more difficult in some areas due to the development of slush and snowdrifts on area lakes. Warm temperatures are forecast for this week and should increase outdoor activities.

Woodruff DNR Service Center area

Between 10-15 inches of snow hit the Lakeland area adding to the fantastic snow base. Good news for snowmobilers and skiers! Ice anglers and those traveling on and about the lakes must beware because of the melting and then freezing. There are a lot of slushy areas on the lakes as a result of the heavy snow this past week and weekend. Most lakes have about a 3 inches layer of slush under the snow. Watch out for a lot of open ice fishing holes that may be covered by the new snow. Travel on the lakes has been pretty much limited to walking and even then, people must be careful. One week remains for game fish season, ending March 1. Fishing remains good for northern and panfish with some walleye also being caught. Fish continue to hold around the green weed flats and edges near the deeper water. All ice fishing shelters must be completely removed from inland waters north of Highway 64 by March 15. Ice anglers may want to consider beginning their removal process in that the slushy conditions on the lakes may make the removal of the ice shanties more difficult. Annual fishing and hunting licenses expires March 31.

Vilas, Oneida, Forest, and Florence counties - The recent heavy snowfall has made vehicular travel on lakes extremely difficult. Large areas of slush are becoming more common as a result. Fishing has generally been slow for walleye, but northern pike and panfish are still providing action on many area lakes.

Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest - As of Monday, Feb. 23, there was still about 2 feet of snow in the woods. The McNaughton, Raven, Madeline and Escanaba cross-country ski trails were all scheduled to be groomed on Tuesday, Feb. 24. Warmer temperatures are in the forecast and trails could deteriorate rapidly. Crews will try to re-groom then for the weekend.

Antigo DNR Service Center area

Last week brought the county 12 inches of new snow from Friday to Monday. Snow depths ranged from 28 to 30-plus inches throughout the area. This added snow has hampered the movement of deer in the area, and caution on snowmobile trails is advised due to deer using the same trails. This new snow has also hampered anglers. Travel on many lakes is limited to plowed trails or snowmobiles. Walking is tough going even for the avid fisherman. Snowmobile trails are all open, but due to the warm conditions and new snow, grooming has been a difficult task. Conditions vary from one segment to another, but in general trail are good, having a good base. The cross-country ski trails are good at the present time but conditions may change drastically if the forecast for warm temperatures and rain this weekend develop.

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Florence DNR Service Center Area

Slush continues to show up on many area lakes making lake travel more difficult. Check out your travel routes carefully. Slush can also cause ice shanties to freeze in and make removal very difficult. Ice shacks need to be off of Northern Wisconsin Lakes by March 15. The Winter Severity Index through Monday, Feb. 23, is 40. The snow depth ranges from 28 inches east of Florence to 30 inches in western Florence and northern Forest Counties. A Severity Index of 50 is considered the beginning of a moderately severe winter. With all the recent snow – deer are moving on snowmobile trails and roads. Many times the deer will be very reluctant to “Move Off”. The best strategy is to slow down or come to a halt if possible to give them the time to jump off. Florence County Forestry and Parks Department is beginning its Ten Year Management Plan revisions process. This will be worked on by the Forestry Staff on a chapter by chapter basis and discussed monthly at the Forestry & Parks Committee Meeting.

DNR Northeastern Region

Peshtigo DNR Service Center area

Marinette County - The heavy recent snowfalls have given the Northwoods a great base for skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobile activities. The snowmobile trail groomers have been out round-the-clock keeping the trails in top shape. A torch light cross-country trail event was held at the Peshtigo State Forest on Saturday, Feb. 21, west of Crivitz. There was great attendance with hot cocoa served around a warming campfire along the trail. For more information on the trails available you may contact the State Forest at (715) 757-3965. Hunter Safety Courses are becoming available for spring signup. The Lake Noquebay Sportsmans Club will again host a course beginning March 16 through March 27. For more information and pre-registration please call the instructor at (715) 856-5027. Perhaps the last Snowmobile Safety Course for the season is being offered in Pound at the Kumalong Sno-Riders Clubhouse off Hwy. 64 on March 3 through 14, please contact the instructor at (920) 897-3340. Turkey are being observed along agricultural lands with Spring Turkey hunters anticipating a successful hunt.

Oconto County - A few more shacks were seen out of the Mouth of the Peshtigo River into the bay and some were at the The Sucker Hole out of Oconto. Inland fishing pressure has been slow. Heavy snowfall with slush forming on top of frozen waterways has slowed vehicle traffic on area lakes and flowages. A Hunter Safety Course is being offered in Oconto at the Middle School beginning March 29, pre-register by calling the instructor at (920) 834-5790. The Pensaukee Hall is hosting a course on March 29 through April 29, the phone number to call is (920) 834-3317.

Shawano County - Heavy snowfall in the area has provided an excellent base for winter activities such as snowshoeing, skiing and snowmobiling. Birdfeeders have seen a nice variety of resident species at their feeders. Grossbeak have been seen feeding off the seeds of box elder trees in flocks. A Hunter Safety Course is available at the Pulaski Middle School on March 2 through April 13. Pre-registration is required by contacting the instructor at (715) 787-3518.

Green Bay DNR Service Center area

Brown County - The warmer weather and slushy snow on the ice didn't stop some anglers. A few were moving their shacks closer to shore others continued fishing where they were. Fishing between Lipsky's in Dykesville and Shoemaker Point remains strong for yellow perch with catches of six fish per person in the size range of 8-9 inches. Incidental catches of whitefish, smelt, and 6-inch walleyes were taken at Red River.

Sturgeon Bay DNR Service Center area

Door County - Yellow perch were being caught along the Bay shore from Chaudoir's Dock to Fish Haven (Wilcox Rd). Many were small but a few were in the 8-9 inch category at Wilcox Road but fish from Chaudoir's Dock were up to 11 inches and limits were met. Incidental catches include 6-inch walleyes and burbot. Rumor has that a few northern pike were being caught near Sand Bay and perch on Larsen's Reef.

Peninsula State Park - Snow depth in the park is about 20 inches. Warm weather and wet snow is taking its toll on trails in Peninsula State Park. Crews are making an effort to groom ski trails with marginal success due to the warm temperatures. Overall conditions range from poor to good, with conditions changing as temperature fluctuate. The Park's 17 miles of snowmobile trails are groomed and in good (but changing) condition. Snowmobiles are limited to marked trails and must comply with a 25 mph speed limit. The sledding hill on the golf course is open. Watch for changing conditions as weather warms during the upcoming week.

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DNR Southeast Region

Most of the snow has melted on area lakes, making for some slushy conditions. Ice is still thick enough to drive on. Warmer weather is in the forecast for this week. Please use caution and be aware of rapidly changing ice conditions.

Sheboygan County - In the Sheboygan marina brown trout have been hit-or-miss through the ice. Small shiners have been the most effective.

Kohler-Andrae State Park - Warm weather this past week and pouring rain received on Friday, Feb. 20, has resulted in poor ski trail conditions.

Ozaukee County - The Port Washington power plant discharge provides good open-water fishing opportunities this time of year. Medium shiners or green & silver spoons have been producing 3 - 5 lb. browns.

Milwaukee County - In Milwaukee, the river under the Hoan bridge near the Summerfest Grounds is open. Decent numbers of brown trout have been hitting spawn sacs. The inner harbor area has been producing browns as well. Silver or green & silver spoons or shiners on a bobber have been catching the most fish there.

Racine County - Wind Lake has been good for bluegills up to 9 inches in 10 to 15 feet of water.

Kenosha County - Nice size crappies were biting on Lake Andrea on fathead minnows in 5 to 10 feet of water. Northern pike action was still good on the north end of Camp Lake in 10 to 15 feet of water on golden shiners.

Walworth County - Geneva Lake has been giving up nice northern pike in the narrows. Big crappies were biting on small jigs and spikes over weeds in 10 to 15 feet of water. Anglers were fishing in 30 to 35 feet of water for yellow perch. On Delavan Lake bluegills were biting on small jigs in 5 to 10 feet of water and yellow perch in 40 feet of water. Walleyes up to 19 inches were biting on golden shiners in 20 feet of water. Anglers were fishing over weeds in 5 to 15 feet of water on Lake Beulah for big bluegills. Northern pike up to 28 inches were biting on shiners on Lake Como.

Washington and (inland) Sheboygan, and Eastern Fond du Lac counties - Panfish action is beginning to pick up on most of the lakes. As expected, bluegills were hitting in spurts during most of the day. Crappies were active at dusk. Northern pike were still being caught on Little Elkhart Lake and the other lakes as well. Ice conditions are fairly good on most area lakes. However, the surface slush is making it difficult to drive out in many cases. Four wheel drives are even getting stuck on some lakes. Take some time to check out conditions before getting stuck and ending up with an expensive towing bill. Anglers are also reminded to pick up after themselves and others. Garbage on the ice as the end of the season approaches makes all ice anglers look bad.

Waukesha County - Recent warm weather is making ice travel on area lakes hazardous. Use caution when traveling on unfamiliar lakes. Some walleye action has been reported on Pewaukee, Okauchee and Oconomowoc lakes. Golden shiners on tip-ups and jigging rapalas fished in 8-19 feet of water have been producing best. Perch and crappies were being taken on jigs and minnows on Pewaukee, Golden and Wind lakes in deeper water areas. Northern pike will be starting to stage for spawning. Best results for northern have come in 12 feet or less using tip-ups and large or jumbo golden shiners. Although oxygen levels are starting to get low on some portions of Big Muskego, fishing remained good. As long as fish are biting, fish managers are not too worried that winterkill will occur. At least once per week oxygen levels are being monitored on Big Muskego. Oxygen levels in Bass Bay Lake, which is attached to Big Muskego, were fine.

Kettle Moraine State Forest - Pike Lake Unit - All trails are open and in fair condition for cross-country skiing. Trails were groomed on Saturday, Feb 21. The park received about 1 inch of heavy wet snow on Sunday evening. Trails are mostly snow covered but some bare spots are showing up. With the warm weather predicted for this week, conditions may deteriorate quickly. Call the forest office at (262) 670-3403 for the current trail conditions. Visitors are reminded that hikers and snowshoers are not allowed on groomed ski trails. Contact the forest office for maps of which trails are open activities other than cross-country skiing. Pike Lake is completely frozen over. Slushy conditions as a result of the temperatures rising, has made travel on the lake difficult. As always, use caution when going out onto any frozen body of water. Permanent ice shanties must be removed from the lake by March 5. With the new snow cover (about 1 inch on Feb. 22), it is fairly easy to see wildlife in the forest. If visitors stop while they are skiing and look carefully all around them, it is very likely you will be able to see deer, hawks, etc.

(more)

DNR South Central Region

Dodgeville DNR Service Center area

Grant County - Recent warm weather and rains have weakened the ice in several sloughs on the Mississippi River and have opened many parts of the Grant and Platte rivers. Caution is advised for those venturing out ice fishing. Backwater slough ice remains solid, in most areas with bluegill and crappie fishing remaining slow in most areas. The bald eagle viewing remains excellent below the Dubuque Lock and Dam #11. This past weekend in excess of 50 eagles could be seen sitting on the ice and in the trees along shore below the dam. At one point, 6 eagles were sitting in one tree on the Wisconsin side providing excellent photo opportunities.

Wyalusing State Park - Warm temps over the weekend and predicted highs of 40 degrees for the rest of this week will melt most of the snow cover at Wyalusing State Park. Cross-country ski trails are in very poor condition. Cardinals are whistling and the first robin was sighted near the park on Saturday, Feb. 21. A redpoll was sighted at Wyalusing last week in addition to the normal winter residents such as cardinals, blue jays, goldfinches, purple finches, nuthatches, chickadees, mourning doves, pheasants, tufted titmice, and hairy, downy, and redbellied woodpeckers.

Green County - Bass and panfish (bluegill and crappie) activity has picked up in the last two weeks, with several bag limits of panfish being taken out of both Beckman and Zander lakes. Bluegill and crappie were a little on the small side, but the activity of catching fish kept the kids busy. Also several bag limits of bass were being caught on Beckman's, which is the larger of the two lakes at the Cadiz Springs State Recreation Area, with several 6, 7 and 8 bass in the mix. Plastic jigs seemed to be working best on the panfish, but larger minnows and chubs worked best for bass. Northern fishing has started to pick up with a few being taken along the shores/ice of the Pecatonica River. Baying dogs was the sound being heard around the countryside this past weekend, with the fresh snow came the coyote and rabbit hunters. Both groups stated there's not shortage of either (coyote/rabbits), having no problem finding a rabbit or coyote to run. ATV and hunter education classes are starting soon. If you are interested phone your local warden; they are sure to point you in the right direction.

Iowa County - Use caution on all ice. Ice conditions are still decent on area lakes but are changing with the warm, rainy weather. Ice conditions along the Wisconsin River sloughs are deteriorating with the increased water flow and thinned the ice. Fishing has slowed a little though some crappies are still being caught on Blackhawk Lake. Crow hunters and coyote hunters have had decent calling success. As long as the snow sticks around, bunny hunting should continue to be real good. The bunnies are holding tight in the thick patches of multiflora rose and best hunted with beagles.

Lafayette County - It has been an interesting week as far as the weather goes. Temperatures in the mid 40s have melted most of the snow on the snowmobile trails. Water levels in streams and rivers have risen significantly with the recent warm weather and rain. A flood warning was issued over the weekend for Eastern Lafayette County. Crappie, walleye, and bass fishing remains strong at Yellowstone Lake. Ice is still over 12 inches in most places, but very sloppy right now with the rain, snow, and warm temperatures. Fishing shanties need to come off the ice by March 5 and the game fish season closes March 1.

Horicon DNR Service Center area

Columbia County - Fishing conditions in Columbia county have been slow but individuals are experiencing success with bluegills and crappies on Crystal Lake. Bluegills and white bass were also being caught on Park Lake in Pardeeville. Hunters were experiencing success with rabbits due to great hunting conditions.

Fitchburg DNR Service Center area

Sauk County - Snowmobile trails are now closed.

Dane County

Lake Kegonsa State Park - Due to recent rain and warm temperatures the cross-country ski trails are in poor condition. The trails are covered with a very thin layer of snow, ice and water. These trails are now open to hiking, but may be slippery in spots.

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Jefferson County - The snowmobile trails in Jefferson and Dodge Counties are currently closed as well as the ATV trail along the Wild Goose Trail. An inch or two of water on the ice on the area lakes and rivers is keeping all the snowmobiles off as well as most ATVs. All rivers and streams in the county have some ice but most are now very dangerous and travel on is not recommended. A few more open areas of water are beginning to appear on the Rock and Crawfish rivers creating unsafe conditions. Run off has deteriorated ice on the river systems. The ice on Hope Lake has some water on top and ranges from 8 to 13 inches in thickness. Ice conditions on area lakes are in pretty good shape except for some sloppy conditions. Blue Spring Lake has some very thin ice areas and open water. Drifted snow has created difficulties traveling on area lakes and recent rain and above freezing temperatures has made the lake kind of sloppy to travel on. Lake Koshkonong's ice cap is in good shape. Areas down around Newville and Thiebeau Point should be avoided, as there is thin ice or pressure cracks. There is a dangerous spot near the springs off the Sunset Tavern on Koshkonong's north side. Most of the north end of the lake has between 20 and 24 inches of ice and cars and trucks are driving out from Vinnie Ha Ha, Blackhawk Island, and North Shore. Lake Ripley has pretty good ice cover with the exception of a small area on the west side of the lake. A Christmas tree marks this area. Most of Ripley has between 18 and 22 inches of ice. Vehicles have been accessing Lake Ripley from the Marina Lane boat landing and the Island Road boat landing. Blue Spring Lake still has some very thin ice areas and open water due to spring action. Rome Pond is iced over with around 14 to 18 inches of ice. The main river channel has less ice. Red Cedar Lake ice conditions have improved but ice thickness varies from 6 to 16 inches. Some have been taking ATVs and snowmobiles onto Red Cedar from the Brosig Lane landing. Golden Lake has pretty good ice to walk on or drive an ATV/snowmobile. Ice thickness is reported to be between 16 and 20 inches. Ice depth on most of Rock Lake ranges from 12 to 15 inches thick and vehicles are still driving off of the boat landings several hundred yards out onto the lake. Anglers fishing on Lake Ripley report fishing has been spotty. Some walleye action has been reported early or late in the day. Northern and bass action has been sporadic with a few nice fish being caught on medium to large shiners. Panfish action has been generally slow. For panfish try fishing Marina Bay or the Southeast Bay. Anglers on Koshkonong report walleye action is slow. Red Cedar Lake had some pretty good tip up action at times this week. Many undersize northerns and bass have been caught and released using medium shiners. Bluegill and crappie action has been slow. Golden Lake has had some northern action in the west bay and south shore. Panfish action has been spotty with some anglers reporting small catches of decent bluegills or crappie but not every day. Crappie action has been very early in the morning or right before dark. Rome Pond has been very slow and few have been fishing there. Blue Spring Lake's action slowed down this week. Some modest catches of perch and bluegill were reported this week but most were small. Some bass are being taken but many are being released. Anglers are catching a few limits of bluegill and some crappie on Hope Lake using waxworms and spikes. A few of the bluegill are up to 7 inches in size but most are under 5 inches. Most of the crappie have also been smaller than what most people keep. Several anglers have been catching northern pike on Hope Lake as well. Some keepers in the 30-inch range have been biting on shiners. On Rock Lake a few bluegill and crappie are also biting on the northwest side of the lake and off Elm Point. Most of the panfish being caught were small. Some keeper northern pike were biting on Rock Lake on shiners. The best success was on the north end of the lake off Tyranena Park. On Mud Lake by Lake Mills anglers have been catching some keeper northern pike on shiners but most of the fish are under the legal size limit. Rabbit hunters have still been having success and a few tavern sponsored hunts are ongoing until the season closes on Feb. 28. Sloppy conditions greeted rabbit and coyote hunters this week. Rabbit hunters report there are a lot of rabbits around but the melting snow and sloppy conditions have made hunting difficult. Coyote hunters using dogs are having good success but again the conditions are getting poor. Hunters report breeding activity is picking up. Some coyote hunters are having good success calling coyotes. Early morning and evening hours have worked well for hunters using calls to entice coyotes into range.

DNR West Central Region

Baldwin DNR Service Center area

Willow River State Park - Warm temperatures, rain, and around three inches of wet snow late last week combined to make ski trails soft and slow during warm weather and a bit faster when it is cold. Icing can be an issue, so it has been a mixed bag of ski trail conditions. Ski traffic was busy on Saturday but the rain-snow mix returned Sunday. Those huge half-dollar size flakes don't stick around long. For the few that skied, it was not a typical Sunday. There was very light use. The skating lane of the cross-country ski trails was groomed Monday night, Feb. 23. No new track was set. Skiers will find fast trails while it is cold and slower as it warms. Skiers and hikers may pick up a Winter Trails Map at the park office. As of Monday morning, there is a thaw in progress. It's a little early to predict, but with the present state of runoff, early trout season anglers could find excellent water flow and clarity on the Willow River. Below the dam, ice shelving along the river banks is not an issue and snow depth is under a foot. Farther upriver above the dam, it's still locked in ice. Trumpeter Swans are still commonly seen in the park and below on the Willow River.

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St. Croix County - The Apple River in the northern part of St. Croix County has minimal ice shelving along banks now and it should be good to go for the early trout season. It is presently running low and clear. The Apple holds its clarity well until it runs bank full, so trout anglers should consider it if the other small rivers are discolored in a couple weeks.

La Crosse DNR Service Center area

They're everywhere! Bald eagles are present everywhere along the Mississippi River, as well as 15-20 miles inland. Take a leisurely drive along STH 35, which parallels the Mississippi River, between La Crosse and Prairie du Chien, and you will see eagles. Watch for them perched in trees, soaring overhead, or standing on the river ice. Tremendous eagle viewing and photography opportunities abound. Opossum's are on the move! With milder weather and increased breeding activities, opossum's can now be seen more frequently along roadsides and creek bottoms. The mostly nocturnal opossums breed from February to March and have a gestation period of only 12-13 days producing on average 9 young per litter. Snowmobile trails are now closed in Monroe and La Crosse counties.

Mississippi River - The Mississippi River has opened up enough to allow boat fishing at Alma, Genoa, and Victory. Nice catches of saugers and walleyes were being caught south of Genoa. Ice conditions on the main channel are rapidly deteriorating so extreme caution is required while ice fishing in areas with current.

Eau Claire DNR Service Center area

Lake Wissota State Park - As of Feb. 20, Cross-country ski trail conditions were good. There were 3 inches of fresh wet snow and temperatures above freezing. The ski trail was holding up to these temperature, but trails do become fast as they become icy. Ski trails were last groomed Feb. 17. Trails open to snowshoeing have a 12 inch snow base.

Red Cedar River State Trail and Hoffman Hills State Recreation Area - The area received 4 inches of new snow Feb. 19. It was very wet and heavy. The most current trails updates can be heard by calling (715) 232-1242. There is plenty of snow though. Be aware that there may be some icy areas from the warm weather.

Wisconsin Rapids DNR Service Center area

Juneau County - Snowmobile trails are in poor condition and may close as weather warms.

Buckhorn State Park - With warming weather, snow is melting and the cross-country ski trails are becoming icy and are in poor condition. Please obey the speed limits as park roads may be icy. The snowmobile trail is closed. Bring your camera along to take winter activity, wildlife, or plant pictures for the photo contest. Ice fishing has been slow. Please use caution on the ice with the warming weather. Walk-in sites 8, 9, and 16 are open for winter tent camping. Check out the accessible cabin Web site - there are still dates available for the cabin.

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UPCOMING EVENTS AT STATE PARKS, FORESTS, AND TRAILS WATCHABLE WILDLIFE OPPORTUNITIES AND INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

Check with the park or forest of your choice for additional activities and special events not listed. Most events are free of charge; park admission sticker required unless otherwise noted. **Events and times subject to change.**

Thursday, February 26, 2004

- **Interstate State Park**, St. Croix Falls, (715) 483-3747 - Nature Storytime and short activity after the story to reinforce the story's nature-related theme. Nature Storytime will generally last between 30-45 minutes, depending on the participants. Ice Age Center. 10 a.m.
- **Whitefish Dunes State Park**, Sturgeon Bay, (920) 823-2400 - Winter Walks: World of Ice. Ice age, icicles, ice drifts and much more to discover while hiking the shore and forest. Learn how each are made and explore this fragile and beautiful world. Dress for the weather for this longer hike. Meet at the Nature Center. 1:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 28, 2004

- **Brule River State Forest**, Brule, (715) 372-5678 - Riverview Loppet. 12K and 24K freestyle, 12K classic, and 5K kids' races. Sponsored by Brule Valley Ski Club and Brule River State Forest. Afterhours Ski Trail. 10 a.m.

Sunday, February 29, 2004

- **High Cliff State Park**, Sherwood, (920) 989-1106 - Cabin Fever Outdoor Survival Program. Get out of the house and into the outdoor for some hands-on experience in creating a shelter and fire for survival. Nibble on a few wild edibles and learn some helpful tips on what it takes to stay safe and alive in the harsh elements of nature. This program is best suited for families with children over age 8. Please call to reserve space. Fees: Friends of High Cliff members \$1/person, nonmembers \$2. Meet at the Pavillion in the Upper Park near the Lookout Tower. 1:30-3 p.m.
- **Pattison State Park**, Superior, (715) 399-3111 - Winter Funfest. Children's crafts, sledding, skating, story telling, a sing-along, an appearance by Smokey Bear, and concessions. No vehicle admission sticker required on this day. Sponsored by Friends of Pattison and Amnicon Falls State Parks. Noon - 3 p.m.

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OUTDOORS CALENDAR

February 28

- Cottontail rabbit season closes in northern and southern zones.

March 1

- The fishing season closes for all game species (except yellow perch is open until March 15) on tributary streams and ditches of Green Bay and the Fox River up to the first dam or lake from through May 5. There is an exception to this closure for portions of 9 major Green Bay Tributaries. Check the current fishing regulations for streams open to fishing. Lake trout season opens on Lake Michigan, Green Bay & Lake Michigan tributaries through Oct. 31.
- Ice fishing shelters must be removed from Wisconsin-Minnesota boundary waters.

March 5

- Ice fishing shelters must be removed from inland waters south of Highway 64.

March 6

- Early catch-and-release only trout season opens statewide, with exception of spring ponds and Great Lakes tributaries; barbless hooks required.

March 7

- Otter trapping season closes in central and southern zone.

March 10 - 2003-2004 hunting and fishing licenses go on sale.

March 15

- Ice fishing shelters must be removed from Lake Michigan, Green Bay, Lake Superior, inland lakes north of Highway 64, and Wisconsin-Michigan boundary waters.
- Yellow perch season closes on Green Bay and its tributary streams and the Fox River from the mouth up to the De Pere Dam.
- Beaver trapping season closes in the Mississippi River zone.

March 20 - Winter crow season closes.

March 27 - Trout season opens on designated sections of some Lake Superior tributaries. See the current Wisconsin Trout Fishing Regulations and Guide for more information.

March 31 - Hunting, fishing, sports, and conservation patron licenses expire.

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DNR Meetings and Hearings Calendar

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodations, including the provision of informational material in an alternative format, will be provided for qualified individuals with disabilities upon request. Please call the contact person listed for the meeting or hearing with specific information on your request at least 10 days before the date of the scheduled hearing.

MEETINGS

February 25 - The Department of Natural Resources Recycling Program will hold a listening session concerning revisions to Administrative Rule NR 544, Effective Recycling Programs from, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in room 158 1300 W. Claremont Ave. **Eau Claire**. The purpose of the meetings is to collect comments on ways to use the rule to strengthen the local recycling programs. For more information, contact: Dan Fields, (608) 266-5334. The meeting dates and times:

February 24-25 - State [Natural Resources Board](#) will meet in Room 027 of the State Natural Resources Building, (GEF 2) 101 S. Webster St., **Madison** regarding matters concerning natural resource issues or Department of Natural Resources program responsibilities or operations specified in the Wisconsin Statutes. People who wish to appear to speak to the board during the citizen participation period must register to appear by calling (608) 267-7420 by 4 p.m. the Friday prior to board meetings. For information, contact Amy Lemberger at (608) 267-7420.

February 26 - Partner Team meeting from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Grand Chute Town Hall. **Grand Chute**. Town Hall is located off of North Lynndale Drive (CTH A), just north of the USH 41 overpass. From the intersection of Northland Avenue and Lynndale Drive, travel north on Lynndale for just over one mile. After you pass over USH 41, there is a sign for the Town Hall at Grand Chute Boulevard. Proceed east for ¼ mile on Grand Chute Boulevard. For more information, contact Kendra Axness at (715) 582-1002.

February 27 – New Source Review Retooling Advisory Group, will meet in room 027, of the Natural Resources building at 101 S. Webster St., **Madison**. For more information, contact Anne R. Urbanski at (608) 267-0573.

February 28 – The Ad Hoc Migratory Committee & Executive Committee of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, 9 a.m. at the Elizabeth Inn, US 51 South & 54 East, 5246 Harding Ave. **Plover**. On the agenda is map handouts of previous fly way zones, present fly zones and potential fly way zones. A goal of the meeting is to reach a concise determination of the North/South zone line. For more information, contact AnnMarie Kutzke at (608) 266-2952.

March 1, 2, 3, 8, 9 & 11 – Wisconsin Conservation Congress Spring District Meetings. For more information, contact AnnMarie Kutzke at (608) 266-2952.

March 1

- District 1 - 7 p.m., Sawyer County Courthouse, **Hayward**
- District 3 - 7 p.m., Tomahawk Ranger Station, **Tomahawk**

March 2

- District 2 - 7 p.m., Rolling Oaks Golf and Supper Club, **Barron**
- District 6 - 7 p.m., Sandhill Wildlife Area (Outdoor Skills Center), 1715 Cty. Hwy. X, **Babcock**
- District 7 - 7 p.m., Finn and Feather, 22 West Main Street, **Winneconne**

March 3

- District 5 - 7 p.m., Alma Courthouse, 3rd Floor, **Alma**

March 8

- District 8 - 7 p.m., Lakeshore Technical College, **Cleveland**
- District 11 & 12* - 6 p.m., DNR Regional Office, 2300 N. Dr. MLK Drive, **Milwaukee**

March 9

- District 9* - 6 p.m., Round Barn, **Spring Green**
- District 10* - 6 p.m., DNR Service Center, **Janesville**

March 11

- District 4 - 7 p.m., Mountain Community Center, **Mountain**
- * District 9, 10, 11 & 12 will have an earlier start time due to a briefing on 2004 CWD rules. For more information, contact AnnMarie Kutzke at (608) 266-2952.

March 4 - The Department of Natural Resources Recycling Program will be holding listening sessions concerning revisions to Administrative Rule NR 544, Effective Recycling Programs. The purpose of the meetings is to collect comments on ways to use the rule to strengthen the local recycling program. This meeting is by teleconference: Time, 10 AM-1 PM Conference Room 3 DNR Office 107 Sutliff Ave **Rhineland** and State of Wisconsin office building 200 N Jefferson St., **Green Bay**. For more information contact: Dan Fields, (608) 266-5334

(more)

March 11 - The Aquaculture Working Group will meet at 6:00 p.m. in the Park Plaza Hotel located at 1 North Main Street, **Oshkosh**, WI. The main item on the agenda is a discussion of the role of private aquaculture in fishery/hatchery management. The Aquaculture Working Group meeting will be after the regular quarterly meeting of the Wisconsin Aquaculture Industry Advisory Council and the day before the start of the Wisconsin Aquaculture Association's annual convention at the same location. Please check the posting at the hotel for the exact room location. For more information contact Jerry Rodenberg, Aquaculture Sector Specialist, at (608) 266-7715

March 12 - The Department of Natural Resources Recycling Program will be holding listening sessions concerning revisions to Administrative Rule NR 544, Effective Recycling Programs. The purpose of the meetings is to collect comments on ways to use the rule to strengthen the local recycling program. The time will be 10 to 11 a.m. in the Kegonsa Room, 1919 Alliant Energy Center Way **Madison**. For more information contact: Dan Fields (608) 266-5334

March 12 - The first meeting of the NR544 (Recycling Program) Revisions Workgroup will be from 11:15 AM- 1 PM in the Kegonsa Room at the Alliant Energy Center, 1919 Alliant Energy Center Way, **Madison**. The workgroup will discuss proposed revisions to the administrative rules governing the recycling program. For more information contact: Dan Fields (608) 266-5334.

HEARINGS

February 23 - A contested case hearing in the matter of an Air Pollution Construction Control Permit issued to ThyssenKrupp Waupaca Foundry, Inc. to increase the capacity of an existing sand handling system and to expand the sand handling ventilation system, Permit No 02-RV-130, located in Waupaca. The hearing will be at 10 a.m. in Meeting Room B at the Waupaca area Public Library, 107 South Main St., **Waupaca**. The hearing will continue on February 24-27 if necessary, at the same location. For more information, contact the Division of Hearings and Appeals at (608) 266-7709.

February 26 – This prehearing conference has been cancelled. A telephone conference in the matter of the feasibility report submitted by BFI Waste Systems of North America for the proposed Lake Area Landfill Southwest Expansion, Town of Sarona, Washburn County

February 27 – The State of Wisconsin Division of Hearings and Appeals will initiate a telephone prehearing conference in the matter of the denial of a request for a variance for Well #001 submitted by Blue Mound Golf & Country Club. The Division of Hearings and Appeals will initiate the call at 10:30 a.m. To participate, persons must write to the Division of Hearings and Appeals and indicate a phone number where they can be reached at the mentioned time. If necessary, the purpose of the prehearing conference will be to identify parties to the proceeding, to simplify the issues which may be contested at the hearing, establish a discovery schedule and set a date for hearing. No testimony will be heard at the prehearing conference. However, a date may be set for the hearing on the merits at the conference. When the hearing is held it will be a Class 1 contested case. For more information, contact the division of Hearings and Appeals at (608) 266-7709.

March 2 – A telephone conference call in the matter of the denial of the Village of Glenbeulah's request for the proposed reconstruction of a private well for use as a Municipal Water Source, Project #W-2003-0092; PWSID# 46004409. The Division of Hearings and Appeals will initiate the call at 10 a.m. For more information, contact the Division of Hearings and Appeals at (608) 266-7709.

March 3 – DNR will hold a public hearing to receive public comments on the preliminary determinations on the operation permit, permit revisions and variance. ISPC Castalloy, Inc., located at 1701 Industrial Lane, Waukesha, submitted to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) a permit application, including plans and specifications for the operation of a variety of alloyed castings, including corrosion-resistant and heat-resistant grades and an application for a variance under ss.NR 445.04(7) and NR 445.05(8), Wis. Adm. Code, from the requirements to apply the lowest achievable emissions rate (LAER) to emissions of benzene from pouring and cooling, and mechanical sand reclamation processes at the facility. The hearing will be held at 1 p.m. in State Office building, Room 151, 141 NW Barstow St., **Waukesha**. For more information, contact Jimmy Chou at (262) 574-2156.

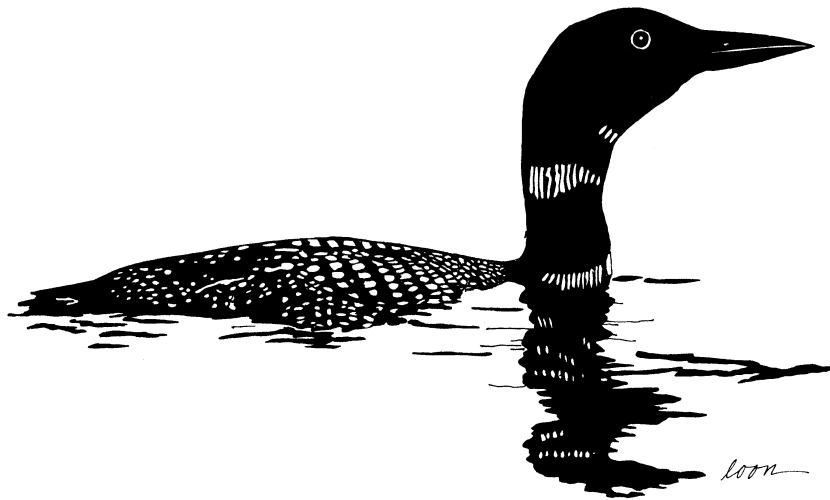
March 5 – A telephone conference at 10 a.m. in the matter of the issuance of an approval for a high capacity well to Bay Towel, Inc. on property owned by Putnam Capital Group LLP, and contested by the Village of Ashwaubenon, Brown County, **And** in the matter of the issuance of a conditional approval for a high capacity well to Pioneer Metal Finishing and contested by the Village of Ashwaubenon, Brown County.

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Department of Natural Resources – CE/6
PO Box 7921 Madison WI 53707-7921

Look for the Loon



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